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# United States Senate

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December 20, 2019

The Honorable R.D. James  
Assistant Secretary of the Army  
for Civil Works  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20310

Lieutenant General Todd Semonite  
Chief of Engineers  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20314

Dear Secretary James and General Semonite,

Thank you for your time and dedication in prioritizing federal investment in the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System (MKARNS). Shipping by water is our Nation's most energy efficient and cost competitive form of transportation.

Unlike other segments of our nation's inland navigation system, the MKARNS is available to shippers year round. Completed nearly 50 years ago, the maintenance needs of the MKARNS are becoming more acute with each passing year; this year, those needs total more than \$245 million. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has identified no less than 35 critical maintenance items, any one of which has a 50 percent probability of failure with the next five years. A failure of even one of these 35 critical items would shut down parts of the system for an extended period of time, or at least significantly slow the movement of commerce on the MKARNS. These critical maintenance items alone require no less than \$235 million to bring them into a state of good repair.

On October 23, 2018, *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018* was enacted, which included authorization for the Three Rivers project to replace the existing containment structures in the entrance channel to the MKARNS. Currently, the Three Rivers project is undergoing pre-construction, engineering, and design (PED) work at an approximate cost of \$15 million. Additional PED work funding would allow the Three Rivers project to proceed to construction.

This year's historic floods substantially, negatively impacted commerce and navigation along the MKARNS with certain segments still seeing limited traffic while the States of Oklahoma and Arkansas continue carry out recovery efforts. As the Administration develops the Fiscal Year 2020 Work Plan for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, we respectfully request your support in providing \$42 million above the President's Fiscal Year 2020 budget request to help alleviate much of the overdue maintenance requirements, and \$5.7 million in funds to efficiently carry out PED for the Three Rivers project. Thank you for your continued support for the MKARNS. We look forward to working with you to ensure funding is provided for these activities in the Fiscal Year 2020 Work Plan.

Sincerely,



James M. Inhofe  
United States Senate